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ABSTRACT

A study quantitatively summarized the literature examining the association between acceptance of rape myths and exposure to pornography to address disputes in the academic community regarding the consistency of such research. The entire collection of "Psychological Abstracts" and "Sociological Abstracts" was manually searched for articles relevant to pornography. A total of 22 studies (with 3,434 subjects): (1) used a stimulus that met the definition of pornography; (2) involved the use of some type of rape myth acceptance; and (3) reported sufficient statistical information to permit an estimate of the association between exposure to pornography and acceptance of the rape myth. Results indicated that survey methodology shows almost no effect (exposure to pornography does not increase rape myth acceptance), while experimental studies show positive effect (exposure to pornography does increase rape myth acceptance). While the experimental studies demonstrate that violent pornography has more effect than nonviolent pornography, nonviolent pornography still generates a positive effect. Overall, while the results are mixed, there exists an association, for those studies using an experimental methodology, between exposure to sexually arousing material and acceptance of the rape myth. (Two tables of data are included. Contains 90 references.) (RS)

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EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY AND ACCEPTANCE OF RAPE MYTHS: A RESEARCH SUMMARY USING META-ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY

AND

ACCEPTANCE OF RAPE MYTHS:

A SUMMARY OF RESEARCH USING META-ANALYSIS

This paper quantitatively summarizes the literature examining the association between acceptance of rape myths and exposure to pornography. The meta-analysis demonstrates that survey methodology shows almost no effect (exposure to pornography does not increase rape myth acceptance), while experimental studies show positive effect (exposure to pornography does increase rape myth acceptance). While, the experimental studies demonstrate that violent pornography has more effect than nonviolent pornography, nonviolent pornography still generates a positive effect. The implications of the findings receive attention.

Despite two U.S. Government Reports (1971, 1986) and one Surgeon General's Workshop (1986), the effects of pornography consumption remain disputed. One review of the literature (Padgett, Brislin-Slutz, & Neal, 1989) comments, "It is a widespread belief that pornography causes negative attitudes toward women, but tests of this belief are contradictory" (p. 479). A growing belief exists of an association between exposure to pornography and some type of pernicious effect (Linz, Fuson, & Donnerstein, 1990; Linz, Penrod, & Donnerstein, 1987; Malamuth, 1989a; 1989b; Soble, 1985; Wilcox, 1987). This belief encounters vehement argumentation from critics suggesting other associations and explanations (See Brannigan, 1987; Kutchinsky, 1985). The controversy over the effects of exposure to pornography becomes more tangled and confusing despite the growing body of empirical efforts to establish what constitute the effects, if any, that exist. This investigation uses meta-analysis to consider one aspect of the pornography effects literature: the association between exposure to the pornography and acceptance of rape myths.

DEFINING RAPE MYTH

Burt (1980) coined the term "rape myth." The term refers to beliefs that persons have about the act of rape, rapists, and the victims of sexual assault. The myth concerns beliefs that people hold about rape as a sex crime for which the victim bears partial or even primary responsibility. According to the rape myth, rapists assume little personal responsibility for their actions. Burt has generated a scale to measure these beliefs called the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMA). Examples of items on the RMA scale (Burt & Albin, 1981) include, "a woman could really resist if she wanted to", "rapists are sex-starved maniacs", "a jilted woman will cry rape to punish the man", and "only bad girls get

raped." These items measure the degree to which a person accepts rape myths.

These items form a scale representing a psychological attitude or predisposition of the individual toward the act of rape, rapists, and the rape victim. The content of the items represents myths because the statements run counter to the known evidence about rape, rapists, and rape victims. The rape myth acceptance scale constitutes a set of beliefs that represent a fundamental misconception about rape. The issue is whether persons exposed to pornography portraying such acts increase the degree of acceptance of these attitudes. If persons, as a result of the exposure to pornography, adopt these beliefs, then pornography functions to promote antisocial beliefs. The danger of accepting antisocial beliefs is that several recent meta-analyses (Kim & Hunter, 1993a; 1993b; Sheppard, Harwick, & Warshaw, 1988) demonstrate a high correlation (about r = .80) between attitude and behavior. This finding produces a pattern consistent with a theory that uses attitudes to predict behavioral intentions and behavior. This possibility is supported by a meta-analysis finding an association between laboratory exposure to pornography and subsequent behavioral aggression (Brezgel, 1993).

Malamuth and Lindstrom (1984) argue that while violent pornography may not contribute directly to the commission of such behavior it may affect one's behavior as a jury member or even in conversations with others on the topic. Acceptance of rape myths may mean that individuals become less tolerant of the rape victim and less likely to convict if serving on a jury. Women, accepting the rape myths, probably would be less likely to report the crime or offer social support to victims. The acceptance of the myth, even if not resulting in direct sexual aggression, may have other significant impacts.

The formal term "rape myth" and the associated RMA scale only includes a small portion of the conceptual terrain considering the effects of pornography on an individual's sexual attitudes. Many associated views of sexual behavior and the acceptability of violence to gain sex, deal with other aspects of belief about the relationships between coercion and sex. Many other similar scales exist: (a) the acceptance of interpersonal violence against women scale (AIV) (b) sexual callousness scale, (c) adversarial sexual beliefs (ASB), and (d) attitudes about the seriousness of rape as a crime.[1] In sum, this set of attitudes toward rape (and coercive sexual behavior) comprises a general psychological predisposition toward rape that this paper labels "rape myth acceptance". The term used in this paper becomes more inclusive than Burt's (1980) notion and represents a more general view of attitudes about rape that minimize the impact of the act.

The link between exposure to pornography and the acceptance of the rape myth stems from a simple premise. Most pornography commodifies sex; women become objects used for male pleasure (Herrett, 1993; Slade, 1975; Smith, 1976). Much of pornography depicts either scenes implying coerced sex or outright rape. The impact of such scenes on the message receivers attitudes toward sexual behavior and their views of rape constitutes a serious concern.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

Two primary theoretical perspectives provide explanations for the effects of pornography: (a) social learning theory and (b) aggression approaches. Each perspective argues for a particular set of relations that should exist as a result of exposure to pornography.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory argues that the stimuli around a person are used to learn about the world (Check & Malamuth, 1983). Mass media images "teach" about the world beyond the personal and create the possibility of contributing to an understanding of social interaction patterns. Potentially, pornography contributes to dysfunctional patterns by creating role models or situations where rewards stem from antisocial behavior (Check & Malamuth, 1983). Rape constitutes an illegal and antisocial behavior that violates the victim's autonomy and sense of personal worth. However, if pornography portrays this violation positively, for the assailant and for the victim, then the material contributes to the learning of an antisocial behavior. The key is whether the material creates a role model from which the consumer of the material learns behavior.

Many consumers of pornography have not committed rape or other sexually violent behavior before the first exposure to pornography (or even after prolonged exposure). Studies demonstrate that individuals do use pornography as a source of information about sexual behavior (Duncan, 1991; Duncan & Donnelly, 1991; Duncan & Nicholson, 1991). Social learning theory argues that the information contained in the films teaches about the nature of sexual relations between people as well as illustrating the mechanics of intercourse. The material illustrates how men and women should treat each other before, during, and after sex. If the depicted relationships involve aggressive and/or violent behavior than those values could be adopted by the consumer.

Conversely, pornography could, under some conditions, promote the learning of prosocial behavior if linked to the proper circumstances (Check & Malamuth, 1984; Linz, Fuson, & Donnerstein, 1990). In fact,

pornography is sometimes used in the treatment of orgasmic dysfunction of women (Wishnoff, 1978). This treatment involves the use of pornography in a clinical setting under the supervision of a psychologist. The typical case involves a married woman unable to experience orgasm, often due to an inability to relax during coitus. The use of the films provides that basis for modelling and encourages the women to relax (the therapy usually has the husband present while viewing the material). The possibility of learning from the media does not necessarily imply that such social learning generate only negative social outcomes.

A whole type of female oriented (some call feminist) type of pornography exists. This pornography is written by females and intended for female consumers, unlike the traditional pornography targeted and produced for male audiences. The defenders of this type of pornography describe the material as pro-woman erotica and socially beneficial. The only empirical test of this material disputes this conclusion (Herrett, 1993). The important point made by these advocates is that effects of pornography can be both positive and negative. The argument revolves around what content the consumer of the material is using to "learn" about the world.

Social learning requires that the consumer accept the behavior portrayed as rewarding (to be imitated) or punishing (to be extinguished). The internalization of the belief that the behavior is rewarding becomes strengthened because pornography physiologically arouses the message recipient's sexual organs (Allen & D'Alessio, 1991). The material, presented as a form of sexual fantasy, arouses the person. If the consumer decides that experiencing sexual arousal when viewing media material is rewarding then one prerequisite for learning is present. The material portraying persons performing sexual behaviors rewarded with

gratification of their desires creates a model to imitate. The potential exists that the message receiver comes to accept the values in the material and desires that the fantasy become a reality. This learning comes from a vicarious experience based on mass media exposure. The learning does not represent typical trial and error learning by the individual from a direct set of encounters. The connection between an individual's personal experiences and those portrayed in the media remains a subject for speculation and further investigation.

The very nature of pornography according to this view may substantially contribute to the acceptance of rape myths. Pornography, by definition, commodifies sex, treating the object of desire (the female) as an object to be acted on. This objectification of sex becomes the content learned by the individual (Brummett, 1988; Czerwinski, 1992). The acceptance of rape myths comes from an acceptance of sexual behavior as an objectified experience and women as merely objects of male pleasure. The violence is not contained in the pornography, the pornography itself is the violence done against women (Palczewski, 1992). Check and Malamuth point out that, "many feminists contend that pornography constitutes 'hate literature' against women, in which women are degraded, debased, and dehumanized'" (1986, p. 182). While many feminists find positive value in artistic forms of erotica, most pornography treats women as objects and therefore contributes to the promulgation of antisocial attitudes about women.

While the theoretical presuppositions may contribute to a simplistic "monkey see-monkey do" attitude, this is inaccurate (Check & Malamuth, 1983). Social antecedents and frameworks for the interpretation of the material are important. If the social learning perspective is correct, then the study should exhibit a positive correlation between exposure and

RMA. In addition, the theory predicts that particular forms of pornography (violent) would further increase the acceptance of RMA. The justification assumes that the material educates the viewer about positive outcomes of such actions, associating the actions with normal and rewarding feelings.

Aggression Responses

This is a set of theories or positions that argue that the erotica or sexual behavior in the material is not the source of negative effects. The source of negative effects, according to this perspective, is the violence or aggression in the material. Many pornographic materials use rape or coerced sexual scenes. This perspective argues that sex without violence is not harmful, whereas sex with violence promotes anti-social attitudes. The argument continues that non-violent erotica would have minimal or no effect, while sexually violent or coercive material would demonstrate an association between exposure and endorsement of rape myths.

While this viewpoint shares much in common with social learning theory, it argues for a specific set of cues must be present in the material for the anti-social learning to take place. This view rejects, in particular, the typical feminist arguments that pornography illustrates the power relationships between men and women (Check & Malamuth, 1986) independent of the particular content. This view argues that the material contributing to the increase in attitudes and subsequent behavior must involve violence within the content of the material.

The argument stems from a belief that the harmful effects of sexual material begin when that material becomes linked with aggressive or violent behavior (Zillman, 1984). The link of sexual stimulation and gratification to violent behavior contributes directly to the rape myth because the line between consensual and non-consensual sex becomes

blurred. Often, the "rape" portrayal depicts initial female resistance to sexual advances, but eventually the woman becomes a willing and eager participant in the sexual encounter (Allen & Burrell, 1991).

This is to be contrasted with sexual depictions involving non-violent mutual consent. Under these conditions the depiction involves the achieving of sexual gratification through nonviolent and consensual means. This material lacks depictions of aggressive behavior linked to domination of the other person (Linz, 1989). The expectation exists that such material (consenting sex) would not have pernicious effects on viewers because such material becomes linked to prosocial feelings and actions promoting consent and respect. This split between violent and non-violent material argues for a modification in the definition of what material should be considered antisocial in effect. This view supports the argument that rape is a crime of violence and not of sex. Much of the research associated with pornography attempts to study the aggression related to sexual behavior (Burt, 1983; Malamuth, 1983; Malamuth & Briere, 1986; Margolin, Miller, & Moran, 1989). The extension to the mass media is that the material inciting antisocial attitudes would be linked to the violence (aggression) in the material and not the sexual content. This view argues that explicit sexual behavior need not involve aggression.

The perspectives on aggression link the effect not to the sexual material but to the violent associations with sexual behavior. Much of the experimental literature examines the effect of a stimulus that uses rape or bondage scenes associated with sexual gratification. This perspective provides an interesting addition to social learning theory by arguing for the existence of cues in the stimulus material. This meta-analysis assessed the possibility of differential effects of violent and nonviolent material. If this view is correct, the effects for

nonviolent pornography should be zero, and the effect for violent pornography should be positive (exposure to pornography associated with increased rape myth acceptance).

INCONSISTENCY IN CURRENT RESEARCH SUMMARIES

Current summaries of research on the effects of pornography compiled by both private individuals and governmental agencies, offer inconclusive summaries. The 1971 Commission Report concluded no evidence exists proving harmful effects as a result of exposure to pornography. The research commissioned by and subsequently provided to the Commission provided little systematic support for negative effects of pornography. The 1986 Attorney General's report reviewed the available scientific evidence. The conclusions of the 1986 report state that the available experimental and survey evidence was inconclusive. The report eventually adopted a "commonsense" approach to the issues. The report argued that, given the inconsistency of evidence, the legal forums must rely on commonsense and/or appeal to ordinary reasoning in addition to the scientific investigations. While the Commission cautions against using testimonial evidence as a primary and authoritative source, the testimonial assertions form an important backdrop for the interpretation of social scientific evidence. The confusion among experts about the meaning and application of existing evidence creates uncertainty among decisionmakers. This increases the power of arguments based on personal anecdotes or observations (Allen & Burrell, 1991). For example, Andrea Dworkin attending a conference in Canada, voiced a feminist response to the disarray among the experts by stating, "I am outraged that someone has to go and study whether hanging a naked woman upside down by a meathook does harm" (1984, p. 771).

The problem involves the academic community division over the

consistency of the available research. Scholars, like Linz (1989) in reviewing the literature, argue for some clear associations. However, others (Brannigan, 1987; Brannigan & Karpardis, 1986; Christensen, 1986, 1987) dispute such conclusions and argue for no effect, based on the same body of evidence. It is important to note that both sides accept the existence of the same body of empirical evidence (Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1987). The disagreement between the parties represents arguments over the interpretation of that body of evidence. Without a clear method of consistently summarizing the evidence, there exists little ability to resolve such disputes.

The scholarly and scientific literature remains divided. The division involves discussions of two central issues: (a) methodological adequacy of existing research and (b) consistency of existing research. Each argument represents a separate consideration expressed by scholars that create the conditions permitting the multiplicity of permissible claims from the same data.

Methodological Adequacy of Existing Research

One criticism inherent to scientific research are the methodological problems in individual research efforts. All attempts at gathering information contain methodological flaws; no individual study achieves or even approaches perfection. However, a comparison of studies that contain different features would test whether those methodological differences cause inconsistency in research findings.

The disputes regarding pornography literature centers on the following issues: (a) laboratory vs. field research, (b) definitions of pornography, and (c) confounding variables (for example, violence in the material). The first issue of laboratory vs. field research is an old one for scientists and poses no new sets of arguments. The central

question considers if the findings of laboratory experiments indicate anything about the world outside the laboratory.

Defining pornography has long been a serious and difficult endeavor. Researchers do not define pornography as much as they provide examples of it to research participants. The process of operationalization in science takes the conceptual definition of a phenomenon and generates a representative example of the definition. Research on the effects of pornography requires that the researcher find an example of pornography for use in the study. Unfortunately, pornography comes in a variety of types and formats. One quick explanation for the inconsistency in research findings argues inconsistency in operationalizations contributes to the inconsistency in the effects observed.

The potential for confounding variables exists. Researchers argue that variables such as the sexual callousness of an individual (Mosher, 1971) should be accounted for when analyzing the possible effects of pornography. Males and females may react differently to the material, introducing another possible individual difference. The dispute over whether the important content producing the effect is the sex or the violence in the pornography remains an issue (Linz, 1989). Summary of the literature must consider the potential influences of these factors or provide evidence against such influences.

The concept of the "perfect" experiment is a myth. Research investigations, on an individual basis, contain errors or limitations that prevent the ability to generate a firm conclusion. The reliance on research inevitably invokes the spectre of relying on fallible and possibly limited data. The conceptualization of what constitutes a perfect experiment, or even series of perfect experiments, will change with time. The methodological diversity existing across studies remains

both a blessing and a curse. If a finding holds up across the diverse methodologies we could conclude the potential exists for a generalizable finding not tied to any particular methodological artifact. However, when inconsistent results are generated using diverse methodologies it becomes difficult to decide the source of the inconsistencies.

Consistency of Available Research

The second aspect of examining research involves the consistency in the findings of available research reports. If consistency exists across investigations then the generation of conclusions remains relatively easy. The existence of inconsistency of findings from report to report creates problems with the synthesis of experimental and survey work in an area. The current research evaluations of the effects of pornography argue for inconsistency in the findings of effects. This inconsistency generates some problems when seeking theoretical or practical applications.

Inconsistency in significance test results often stem from insufficient statistical power due to small sample sizes. The problem of findings is that there may exist an effect but the effect is not significant due to a small sample size. This problem results in Type II error (false negatives). For example, suppose four studies exist that examine the relationship between two variables. Two studies find a significant relationship while two studies do not find a significant association. The normal process of literature review would suggest that there is an inconsistency in the research. However, suppose all four studies observe a .20 correlation between the two variables. Consider that two studies use a sample size of 50 while two studies use a sample size of 140 persons. In this case the observed effect is exactly the same across all four investigations, the only difference among the studies is

the sample size of the investigations. This means that the two studies observing no effect have small sample sizes and the lack of an effect is simply the result of Type II error.

One solution to the problem of Type II error is just to increase the sample size of the available research. Unfortunately, it is not possible, post hoc, to increase the sample size of any individual investigation. Meta-analysis provides the possibility to average effects across investigations. The resulting average simulates the effect of increasing the available sample size. However, an average effect size becomes interpretable only if the effects represent a homogeneous set of effects. A homogeneous set of effects suggests that the differences between effects constitute differences caused by sampling error. If the effects are heterogeneous the mean effect indicatest an effect that represents not one normal distribution but more than one possible distribution. As such, the interpretation of the effects depends on the proper application of coding to understand the possible moderating features of the data set.

The application of meta-analysis, or quantitative literature summary techniques reduce the problems associated with Type II error. The effect of meta-analysis is the creation of a statistical average effect that increases the sample size of the estimate. Instead of reliance on the sample sizes of individual investigations, the average generated from meta-analysis carries the properties of the combined sample sizes (assuming homogeneity across the sample of effects). The net result reduces Type II error by increasing the power of the subsequent statistical tests. As the sample size becomes very large the sample estimates approach population parameters.

METHODS

Literature Search

The entire collection of Psychological Abstracts and Sociological Abstracts was manually searched for articles relevant to pornography. Bibliographies relevant to pornography were consulted (Byerly & Rubin, 1980; Check, 1985; Donnerstein, 1980; Linz & Malamuth, 1993; Longford Committee Report, 1972; Nordquist, 1987; Osanka & Johann, 1989; Yaffe & Nelson, 1982) and references obtained. Every article's reference section was examined and cited material obtained. This process generated over 900 manuscripts that received examination.[2] This examination selected relevant manuscripts used in this report. Manuscripts included in this report met the following criteria:

(a) The manuscript used a stimulus that met the definition of pornography. The definition of pornography used in this report included material intended or expected to create sexual arousal for the receiver.

(b) The manuscript involved the use of a measure of some type of RMA; RMA was defined as an attitude toward rape or the use of force against women in a sexual context. Examples of such scales include: (a) Sexual callousness, (b) attitudes toward interpersonal violence, (c) adversarial sexual beliefs, (d) perceptions of rape harm to victim, (e) willingness to rape, and (f) combinations of such scales. See Table 1 for a list of studies and measurement devices used in each study.

(c) The manuscript had to report sufficient statistical information to permit an estimate of the association between exposure to pornography and acceptance of the rape myth. Manuscripts without sufficient statistical information become excluded from this analysis (Malamuth, 1983; Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Mullin, 1993; Perse, 1992; Stille, 1984). In every case, the inability to recover information stemmed from the use of multivariate

techniques without recourse to zero-order correlations or other statistics permitting recovery of information. Hunter and Schmidt (1990) warn that the reliance on techniques such a multiple regression, discriminant analysis, or canonical correlation without supplying a complete zero order correlation matrix can doom recovery efforts since no estimate of simple associations is possible from such techniques. At least three persons estimated each effect size, disagreements resolved through discussion of the differences. Studies using multiple measures generated an effect size by averaging across the measures. Tests found no effect for measurement instrument. This process of averaging across multiple self-report measures is consistent with other meta-analyses (Allen, Hunter, & Donohue, 1989; Dindia & Allen, 1992).

Manuscript Coding

Survey or Experimental Research

This code determined whether the investigation used an experiment or survey methodology. An experiment involves the use of a particular stimulus material to represent pornography. A survey asks the participants to list the frequency of exposure to kinds of sexually-oriented materials. A survey employs self-selection or natural variation to correlate with the belief in the rape myth. An experiment, on the other hand, uses experimental manipulation of the material to determine exposure. In an experiment, the investigator provides the stimulus to which the receivers respond.

Type of Stimulus Material

The various investigations used a variety of designs, often involving a control group compared to one or more experimental groups. Many experiments used no control group. Several investigations compared the effects of violent to nonviolent pornography. Violent pornography was

defined as the use of physical coercion to achieve a sexual union with an unwilling partner. This unwillingness stemmed from the initial point at which it became clear that sex was intended.

This results in a series of possible comparisons. Pornography (violent or nonviolent) to a control, or types of pornography to each other (violent compared to nonviolent) to determine an effect. These investigations are directly relevant for a comparison of the theoretical perspectives. Social learning would argue that all comparisons should generate positive effects but violent pornography would provide the largest effect. Aggression perspectives argue that only violent pornography should provide a positive effect and nonviolent erotica should not increase acceptance of rape myths.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis proceeded according to the recommendations of Hunter and Schmidt (1990). This technique has been called the variance-centered form of meta-analysis (Bangert-Drowns, 1986). The key to the process involves the assumption that the average effect comes from a single population of effects and deviations from this average effect stem from sampling error.

This review uses as a metric for comparison the correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient was selected because of the ease of interpretation of the effect of any relationship (Rosenthal, 1984, 1987). Statistical manipulations and potential corrections become easier and more understandable when using the correlation coefficient. Also, monte carlo tests by Tracz (1984) provide evidence that potential problems of lack of independence of estimates do not effect the mean or standard deviation of averaged correlations.

All average correlations were tested for the existence of potential

moderating variables. The issue of moderator variables addresses whether the average correlation represents a homogeneous sample of correlations or not. A significant chi-square indicates that the effects observed are not homogeneous while a nonsignificant chi-square indicates homogeneity. The averaging procedure in meta-analysis assumes that the average correlation represents an average across a single sample of correlations drawn from a single distribution. If this assumption is met, the correlations should be homogeneous and the only difference between the correlations stems from sampling error. The homogeneity test provides evidence for or against this assumption. The particular statistical tests used are outlined by Hedges and Olkin (1985).

RESULTS

Overall Analysis

The overall analysis of 22 studies with 3,434 subjects demonstrates an average positive correlation ($r = .100$) between exposure to pornography and the acceptance of a rape myth. The effect is not homogeneous $X^2_{(20)} = 35.83$, ($p < .05$). This result, while generates a positive correlation, indicates the probable existence of a moderator variable that should be analyzed. A moderator variable means that the overall average effect generated by this analysis is an average representing multiple samples. The average should be interpreted cautiously until after identifying the moderating features. See Table 2 for a summary of the results.

Comparing Experiments to Surveys

Consideration of the nature of the data collection led to separating surveys from experiments. Averaging across the six survey investigations demonstrated a small positive correlation ($r = .036$, $N = 1186$). The test for potential moderating influences was negative, $X^2_{(5)} = 8.93$ ($p >$

.05). The insignificant chi-square estimate demonstrates homogeneity across the survey data. This means that this sample probably does not contain a moderating variable.

The experimental data were analyzed separately. The average correlation ($r = .134$, $N = 2,248$) was positive and relatively large. The chi-square estimate for homogeneity provided no support for the existence of a moderating condition $X^2_{(15)} = 19.19$ ($p > .05$). A comparison of the experimental and survey correlations shows that there exists a significant difference between the correlations ($z = 2.75$, $p < .05$). The results suggest that the experimental research generates a larger effect than the survey research.

Type of Stimulus Comparison

Three types of comparisons exist in the literature: (a) control to violent pornographic effect, (b) control to nonviolent pornography effect, and (c) violent to nonviolent pornography. Some experiments contained all three groups and represent multiple comparisons, although within any single group a data set only appeared once.

The control to violent pornography film comparison demonstrates the violent pornography increases the acceptance of rape myths ($r = .101$, $k = 5$, $N = 719$) produces homogeneity results ($X^2_{(4)} = 8.18$, $p > .05$). This finding indicates the violent pornography does increase the acceptance of rape myths consistently.

The control to nonviolent pornography comparison finds that nonviolent pornography increases the acceptance of rape myths ($r = .117$, $k = 7$, $N = 1048$). The observed effects were homogeneous ($X^2_{(6)} = 0.00$, $p > .05$). Nonviolent pornography increased acceptance of rape myths when compared to a control film. The results indicate that violence within the pornography is not necessary to increase the acceptance of rape myths.

While the observed effect for nonviolent pornography/control (r = .117) is slightly larger than that of the violent pornography/control, this comparison involves an indirect test. A more direct comparison occurs in the next section for experiments that had both a violent and a nonviolent form of pornography for direct examination.

The pornography studies comparing violent to nonviolent forms find that violent pornography increases rape myth acceptance more than nonviolent pornography (r = .149, k = 8, N = 762). The distribution of effects represents a homogeneous set of estimates ($X^2_{(7)} = 9.94$. $p > .05$). This finding demonstrates the violent pornography has a larger impact then nonviolent pornography on rape myth acceptance. The findings do illustrate that nonviolent pornography has an effect but this last comparison argues that violent pornography probably has a larger effect.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this analysis provide a set of mixed results about the associations between exposure to pornography and rape myth acceptance. However, the bulk of the findings conclude that exposure to pornography, at least in experimental settings, increases the acceptance of rape myths. The generalizability of the finding causes some concern because of the difference demonstrated between the experimental laboratory setting and the field setting of a survey.

A distinction between exists the effect sizes observed between the experimental and the survey research. The survey research shows little, if any, effect of exposure to pornography while the experimental research provides a consistent positive relationship between the exposure to pornography and the acceptance of rape myths. The issue becomes one of differentiating why one set of findings occurs for laboratory research and another for survey research. On the other hand pornography may function

differently for the survey respondent (an habitual user vs. total abstainer) versus an experiment that exposes a large number of persons for the first time.

Theoretically, the summary information supports the social learning theory of pornographic effects. The aggression approaches receive support to the extent that the effect for the violent material when compared to the nonviolent material is larger, but contrary to the predictions of the aggression approach, a positive effect exists for nonviolent pornography. The increased effect for violent material is consistent with social learning theory suggesting that as the coercion within the material increases so does the acceptance of rape myths. The aggression approaches argue for some particular types of cues that would generate the association between rape myth acceptance and exposure to pornography. The finding in this report does not disprove the aggression approaches, no single association can be taken as sufficient evidence for that. However, the findings do call into question the reliance on particular cues (sexual arousal, violence, etc.,) in the material as necessary explanations for the effects observed by empirical investigations.

Several limitations exist in this meta-analysis. One problem inherent to any meta-analysis involves the limitation of only working with existing data sets. If the original data pool contains any limitation or any restriction than the subsequent meta-analysis reflects this. The current data suffers from some limitations that cannot be corrected by this meta-analysis. For example, limited data exists using survey formats. Even less data exists directly trying to compare survey and experimental formats. In addition, the work utilizing violent materials suffers from a shortage of available information.

Only subsequent research can address these limitations. Given the

importance of the issues, the relatively small pool of data currently available should encourage more replication before providing definative answers. One cause for concern was the existence of recent data sets that utilize multivariate methods without providing zero-order correlation matrices. Multivariate solutions, however useful, provide no contribution permitting the comparison of scientific studies of pornography effects. No meta-analysis can incorporate the information contained within the reports. This means that more research may not provide more information unless the reporting procedures reflect a sensitivity to the need to provide information that permanently contributes to the historical record. Despite the limitations and need for future research, the consistency of the available research on some claims points to some consideration of the possible effects of the material.

A second limitation of this meta-analysis concerns the inability of the analysis to isolate a causal relationship among variables. While this meta-analysis demonstrates an association, the reason for this association remains unspecified. This severely limits the conclusions or claims of any particular analysis, however, the results do change the nature of the discussion in an important manner. Before the analysis the discussion was over whether any effect existed. The discussion after the appropriate meta-analysis becomes how to explain the findings. This is an important and necessary shift for the progression of a science: from whether a fact exists to the theoretical and/or methodological explanations for the findings.

Theoretically, the results of the meta-analysis indicate only marginal support for various aspects of the perspectives. The real problem is that in this version of the meta-analysis all that exists is a single estimate for one association between two variables. The theoretical approaches

specify more complex sets of associations and causal mechanisms beyond the scope of the data contained in this report. In fact, the representations of the theories in this report only briefly and incompletely describe the richness of the underlying cognitive assumptions of the approaches. The full scale development and testing of the models is not possible with the current information. The results only provide a crude indication of the potential of the model to account for some foundational sets of associations. While eventual testing and evaluation of the full models will become possible, such tests require the generation of additional associations and data sets targeted at such explanations.

The association analyzed in this report provides some evidence of an effect between pornography and acceptance of rape myths (at least in experimental settings). The implication of the findings for those advocating certain types of controls on the content of the media is unanswered in this report. The application of the findings of the report to public policy decisions requires a theoretical and moral framework for interpretation of this report. The issues regarding the regulation of mass communication consider the evidence generated by social scientists. Evidence, particularly generated by this report, does not inherently mandate or specify any action. This means that the use of this material for particular claims about effects or actions involves extrapolations that require a defense beyond the contents of this report.

Future research must consider several issues. The effect of violence in the material and the measurement used to elicit responses deserves further consideration. The current literature provides little consistency in the measurement of the violence within the material to permit comparison among experiments. This statement should not be construed as preferring any methodology or measurement technique. The statement

intends to recognize the impact of methodological features on the observation of particular effects. The investigator should consider the potential impact that such choices carry in the examination of the effect of any mass media stimulus such as pornography.

The self-selection bias creates a problem for any examination of the effects of pornography. One explanation for the difference between survey and experimental research is that in survey research the exposure to pornography is self-selected and in experiments such exposure becomes initiated by an outside agent (the investigator). This could mean that porn has little effect on persons normally consuming such materials (either because of satiation or catharsis). This contrasts with the "invited" exposure of the experiment, where a large number of persons may be viewing such material for the first time. For persons unfamiliar with such materials, the attitudinal and behavioral impacts, particularly with immediate post-exposure measures, may be much more substantial than for habitual users. The distinction is between those persons looking for a particular media depiction versus those surprised by what they are seeing in the laboratory. Given the increased use of satellite broadcasting and VCR rentals, this self-selection issue represents a growing consideration. The differences between experimental and survey research may reflect a methodological artifact (self-selection) associated with real differences in actual effects. This meta-analysis cannot directly resolve this problem. Future research can and should address this problem. Planned subsequent meta-analyses by the authors focus on individual differences involving experience both with sexual materials and sexual practices could address this issue.

Overall, while the results are mixed, some important issues receive clarification. There exists an association, for those studies using an

experimental methodology, between exposure to sexually arousing material and acceptance of the rape myth. Such an analysis does not provide a sufficient basis for claims of causality, especially for behavioral outcomes. This investigation represents only a modest beginning in synthesizing and understanding the effects of pornography. When combined with other effects and additional data the increasing clarity of the impact of pornography on the consumers of the material should become apparent.

FOOTNOTES

[1]These other scales, while using different items and slightly different emphases about the nature of relationships, coercion, and sexual relations do share a great deal of conceptual territory with the RMA scale. For example, the AIV scale examines the relative acceptability of using violence against women (Burt, 1980), particularly to satisfy sexual desires. Items include, "Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to women", "Many times a woman will pretend she doesn't want to have intercourse because she doesn't want to seem loose, but she's really hoping the man will force her", and "Sometimes the only way a man can get a cold woman turned on is to use force" (p. 222). The sex callousness scale (Mosher, 1971; Zillmann & Bryant, 1982), lists items that ask the respondent to evaluate such statements as "Pickups should expect to put out", "A man should find them, fool them, fuck them, and forget them", "A woman doesn't mean 'no' unless she slaps you", and "If they are old enough to bleed, they are old enough to butcher" (p. 14). The Adversarial Sexual Beliefs (ASB) Scale (Burt, 1980) represents related attitudes about sexual relations that indicate the level of acceptability for the use of physically coercive behaviors by males for sexual gratification as an accepted part of relationships between males and females. The items deal with aspects relating to sexual behavior and force, for example, "Men are out for only one thing", "A woman will only respect a man who will lay down the law to her", and "A lot of women seem to get pleasure in putting men down" (p. 222). These statements, while not directly indicating a specific attitude toward rape, provide an indication about attitudes toward sexual behavior consistent with the acceptance of rape myths. Another measure associated with the rape myth constitutes the attitudes toward the conviction and punishment of rapists (see Donnerstein &

Berkowitz, 1981; Krafka, 1985). Rape myths suggest that rape is not a serious crime and rapists deserve little punishment. The devaluation of rape as a serious crime justifies reduced sentences and verdicts of not guilty. An individual's attitude toward the crime of rape generates another reflection of the impact of the rape myth.

[2]Many studies existed that appeared initially to be relevant. However due to methodological or stimulus issues were excluded (Briere & Malamuth, 1983; Check & Guleoin, 1989; Check & Malamuth, 1985b; Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981; Heilbrun & Seif, 1988; Koss & Dinero, 1988; Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1985; Malamuth, 1981; Rapaport, 1984). The full bibliography of sources examined on this issue as well as details on coding, statistical calculations, and inclusion/exclusion decisions is available from the first author. The project started with over 900 manuscripts and then each one was reviewed by two persons to determine if relevant or not. The problem is that while there exists a large amount of material relevant to the study of pornography, little of it addresses the impact of exposure on RMA. Some studies were not included because: (a) the design did not involve exposure to or questions about exposure to pornography (Briere & Malamuth, 1983), (b) the data is reported in another place (Check & Guleoin, 1989; Check & Malamuth, 1985b), (c) the RMA device is used as a manipulation check to validate the content of the pornography but not as a dependent measure of attitude (for example the question asks whether the woman depicted in the film was responsible for the action or distressed by it, not how the subjects feel about the action) (Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981; Heilbrun & Seif, 1988; Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1985), (d) the measure of pornography is imbedded in another larger measure of general sexual experiences and not available for direct analysis, like the Sexual Experiences Scale, (Koss & Dinero, 1988), (e)

the dependent measure does not indicate attitudes toward rape myth acceptance (Malamuth, 1981), and (f) the RMA used as independent variable or pretest variable not as dependent variable (Imrich, 1992, 1993; Rapaport, 1984).

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Table 1

List of Studies and Measurement Instruments

Author[1]	date	Measurement Devices*
Burt	1980	AIV, ASB RMA
Check	1985	FS, LRFS
Demare, Briere, Lips	1988	AIV, ASB, RMA
Donnerstein, Berkowitz, & Linz	1986	RMA
Garcia	1986	ATR
Herrett	1993	AIV, ABS, RMA
Krafka	1985	RMA, AIV, ATR
Linz	1985	DW
Malamuth	1986	AIV, HTW, SA
Malamuth & Ceniti	1986	LRSA
Malamuth & Check	1980	LRSA
Malamuth & Check	1981	AIV, RMA
Malamuth & Check	1985	WEFS
Malamuth, Haber, & Feshbach	1987	PR
Mayerson & Taylor	1987	AIV, RMA
Mosher	1971	SC
Padget, Brislin-Slutz, & Neal	1989	RMA
		RMA
		RMA
Smeaton & Byrne	1987	LRSA
Stock	1983	RRS
Zillman & Bryant	1982	PR, SC

*indicates for the following: AIV= Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence (against women), ASB= Adversarial Sexual Beliefs, ATR= Attitudes Toward Rape, DW= Degrading Women, FS= Attitude toward the acceptability of Forced Sex, HTW= Hostility Toward Women, LRSA= Likelihood of Rape or Sexual Aggression, PR= Level of Punishment for Rapists, RMA= Rape Myth Acceptance scale, RRS= Rape responsibility Scale, SA= Sexual Aggressiveness scale, SC= Sexual Callousness scale, WEFS= Women Enjoy Forced Sex scale

Table 2

Correlations Between Pornography Exposure and Rape Myth Acceptance

Author[1]	date	r	N	survey or Experiment
Burt	1980	.082	598	survey
Check	1985	.098	431	experiment
Demare, Briere, Lips	1988	.041	198	survey
Donnerstein, Berkowitz, & Linz	1986	.254	60	experiment
Garcia	1986	-.010	115	survey
Herrett	1993	.151	417	experiment
Krafka	1985	.015	136	experiment
Linz	1985	.101	99	experiment
Malamuth	1986	.250	95	experiment
Malamuth & Ceniti	1986	.000	42	experiment
Malamuth & Check	1980	.260	74	experiment
Malamuth & Check	1981	.061	265	experiment
Malamuth & Check	1985	.207	111	experiment
Malamuth, Haber, & Feshbach	1987	.041	91	experiment
Mayerson & Taylor	1987	.352	96	experiment
Mosher	1971	-.080	98	survey
Padget, Brislin-Slutz, & Neal	1989	.084	118	survey
		-.280	59	survey
		.065	66	experiment
Smeaton & Byrne	1987	.000	70	experiment
Stock	1983	.320	75	experiment
Zillman & Bryant	1982	.175	120	experiment